

Cocoa Reflection



Why does it matter whether or not we buy Fairtrade? This meditation, drawn from our experience visiting cocoa farmers, gives background to help people understand why Fairtrade is needed. Use it to start a presentation and then share a story about how Fairtrade is benefitting cocoa farmers. Find materials on our website: <https://www.ccow.org.uk>.

First you plant the seed and tend it.
Shelter it. Water it.
Wait until the sapling
Is ready to plant
In soil you have prepared.

Then you surround it
With plants that will shade
But not overcrowd it
And you wait
For years
Feeding the soil,
Watching its branches and leaves,
Protecting them from insects,
As it grows
And matures
Until finally the pod bursts from the bark
And swells
Thick with seeds and fibres
And is ready to be picked.

Then you break open the pod
Scoop out the beans,
Ferment them,
Spread them to dry
On a table.
You turn them with your hands,
Running your fingers
Through the rich, brown harvest,

Sorting, searching out
The bean that is not quite right,
Cherishing the others.

And then you sell the beans
Hoping
That the money they bring
Will provide for your daughters and sons.

But what if buyers take your precious beans
And give you in return
So little money
That it will not cover your family's needs
And there is not enough for school,
Or medicines when you need them,
Or access to clean water
Or good food for the table?

What if
As the heat soars
And floods rise
And pests multiply
Your return gets smaller and smaller
And your care for the land
Seems to mean nothing.

What if, each day
As you walk towards the trees,
The question comes, unbidden, insistent:
How will we survive?